

## FRIEND OF THE FRIENDLESS.

Mrs. Romer's Beautiful and Helpful Work in the Home Schools.

Something About the Preparation of Her Cooking-Lesson Cards.

Mrs. J. B. Romer, the author of the cooking lessons which will be printed in *House and Home* columns beginning next Monday, has just resigned from the Board of Managers, and the Home for the Friendless loses one of its best friends.

The work of the institution is practically beautiful, and Mrs. Romer has done as much as any one individual to make it so. When she started out to do mission work she had plenty of leisure and abundant means. After looking over the field she selected the children for what she modestly termed her interest.

The Home for the Friendless has twelve Home Industrial Schools, with an annual enrolment of 5,700 of the poorest specimens of childhood, probably, on the continent. There is absolutely nothing about them to be depended upon—not even their attendance. A child who lives in a "middle flat" one week may be in a dispossessed heap on the street or in an institution the next. The teachers are care-takers and polyglots as well as instructors, for nine nationalities are represented, and many of the midgees need washing, combing, feeding and dressing before schooling. A pleasing exercise occurs at noon, when slices of fresh bread are distributed. There is never any butter. So many essentials have to be provided that the luxuries are not even mentioned.

Mrs. Romer happened in at the old Allen Street Home School during the distribution, and it occurred to her that she might help the robins to feed themselves. Material was provided, a school

kitchen improvised, an hour set aside for a lesson, and "the lady" proceeded to show the larger girls and boys how to cook. The very same dishes served at her home in East Orange were prepared, and that day the Allen street children had a party, in that lesson the teacher learned a little she knew about plain cooking and practical mission work. She could cook anything in the market, and yet think of nothing within the means of the poor pupils so hungry to learn.

Mrs. Romer withdrew. She went to a college where, normal teaching is the profession of the faculty, and took the cooking course. All through the work there was constant friction between the teacher and pupil. The other insisted on plain cooking. There were delicious ways of serving cauliflower that appealed to the taste, but the dressing called for 32 worth of game and a 34 penny to squeeze it. Somehow, the science of cooking for hard-working people did not appeal to the professional cook, who was inclined to speak of neck, corn-cakes, codfish and dried peach pudding with contempt.

However, the course was finished and a set of cooking lessons prepared. Then Mrs. Romer went back to the Home School and commenced all over again. The work was at once a delight and a disappointment. The anxiety of the boys and girls to learn was so great and their aptitude so remarkable that the gentlewoman was ashamed of her cooking. It was a very toothsome and pleasant duty, but the story of a pupil who in copying it spent 12 cents for bread to fry the croquettes, and was whipped by her mother for using up the coal money, was only one incident in connection with the history of Mrs. Romer's now famous cooking lessons.

The children were put into white blouses and caps and went to the kitchen by way of the bathroom. Once a week they went to market, and were taught what to buy and where to buy it for the least money. Everything cooked was properly served and promptly devoured, and in giving out the lesson to be prepared at home she also gave the pupil a card to take to the teacher, for which each child was given a pack of cards. No meal ever exceeded 30 cents, fuel included, and this was sufficient for nine children, with bread to piece it out. In the public schools where cooking is taught needless and valuable time is lost in copying the recipes. Mrs. Romer has a better system. She reduced her cards to lessons of from three to five dishes each, and had them printed on stiff cards, each card representing a suitable meal. These cards were sold to the children for a penny, and to the teachers for 25 cents a set. So many requests were sent to the home schools for these lessons that Mrs. Romer had them copyrighted and published.

Her object in preparing these cooking cards for the children was, first, to teach them to cook the meals for the family when the mothers were out at work, and second, to inculcate a liking for domestic service and encourage the girls to prefer it to the shops as a means of support.

In speaking of her work she states emphatically that the recipes were not prepared for the rich or even comfortably situated, but intended for practical use in the homes of the poor.

"If through the columns of *The Evening World*," Mrs. Romer said, "my lessons prove helpful to those who in these hard times are realizing that life is a struggle, I shall be glad."

"In teaching the children of the poor to cook at home several things must be considered. The material must be such as their parents can afford. The dishes must be prepared in a simple and inexpensive manner, and, as many buy coal by the pail, a minimum of fuel is available. These lessons have been arranged with great care, and it is hoped will prove useful, not only for those for whom they were intended, but also for inexperienced housekeepers and those obliged to practice economy."

Another valuable contribution to industrial school literature is a book of cooking and sewing songs and recitations, edited by Mrs. Romer. "Finished

Work," sung to the air of "The Campbells Are Coming," begins:

Our omelets are finished, tra la! tra la! And if you should try them you all would say The best you have tasted for many a day.

The toast, sung, set to the time of "Billy Boy," runs:

Can you make a piece of toast, Little maid little maid? Can you make a piece of toast, Little maid? I can make a piece of toast, If I am but a very little maid.

The opening song, heard at every class lesson, would touch a tender chord in every college man who ever loved Fair Harvard. The words, by Miss Fanny Crosby, begin:

"It's wrong to be idle, the time is too short To spend every moment in play. When all can be useful and busy as bees, And here we are learning the way.

We learn how to cook for the loved ones at home And promptly their meals to prepare. And thus to the hearts of our mothers we give A rest from their burden of care."

This little book, as well as the cards, is in use in all the Home Schools of New York, and in industrial and mission schools elsewhere. NELLIE NELSON.

"IN MURDERERS' ROW."

A Story for Sunday About a Popular Tammany Chief.

The interesting biographies of Tammany leaders will be continued in "The World" to-morrow. This instalment tells of the career of a big chief, now a

high city official, who may succeed Mr. Croker in time as boss of the Tammany organization.

"In Murderers' Row" is the taking title, and the deliberate and cold-blooded murder committed by this honored citizen will form a part of the biography. He will read it with suppressed pleasure, and may have it framed to adorn his office wall. Read it.

Only.

(From the Boston Gazette.)

"I'll work my fingers' ends off to support you if you'll only have me."

"But I don't want a slave."

"Ah, considerate girl! What do you require?"

"Only."

"No; a millionaire."

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